



**Opportunities for Teachers,
Results for Urban Students**

Changes to the Indianapolis Public Schools’ Reduction in Force (RIF) Process for Teachers in Years One through Five

Introduction

On April 5, 2010, the Indianapolis Education Association approved a contract amendment that adds performance measures to the layoff decision-making for first through fifth year teachers. Veteran teachers in years six and beyond will not be affected by this policy change.

What do the new provisions accomplish? Previously, years of experience and licensure status were the only factors used to determine which teachers to dismiss; now, thanks to the collaborative work of a committee made up of staff and teachers from the Indianapolis Education Association and the Indianapolis Public Schools, the results of teacher evaluation will also be a factor that determines which teachers stay or go for first through fifth year teachers. Working under the constraints set forth by Indiana law (PL 110), the committee selected two areas of teacher evaluation to include in lay-off decisions: classroom management and instructional competence—a measure of the teacher’s ability to help her/his students learn. *This is a significant policy change, as it places seniority as only one part of a larger consideration of a teacher’s performance in deciding which teachers to retain or layoff.*

Context of the Work

During the previous contract agreement, the Indianapolis Education Association (IEA) and the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) appointed a joint labor-management committee to study the Reduction in Force (RIF) provisions of the IPS teachers’ contract and create new policy. The committee met starting in the fall 2009, at the urging of the Indianapolis Teaching Policy Fellows who wanted to see changes enacted. Two of the Teaching Policy Fellows served as members of the committee.

Table 1. Before and After the New Policies

Before the RIF Policy Changes	After the RIF Policy Changes
All layoff decisions were based strictly on seniority – number of years in the classroom.	Layoff decisions will be based on a variety of factors, including teacher performance and professional behavior as well as seniority.
Teachers and principals had no input in decision making about which teachers were asked to leave and which to stay.	Teachers and principals have input into staffing decisions through evaluations and performance.

How Does the New Layoff Process Work?

Begins with First- and Second-Year Teachers

To lay teachers off in the most objective manner possible, when a reduction in force must happen, the district will begin with first- and second-year teachers as a group. Each principal will submit a list of teachers in the school to recommend for lay-off to the central office. Administrators are encouraged to base these recommendations on supporting evidence from the teachers’ evaluations in the domains of instructional competence and classroom management.

Next, Third- through Fifth-Year Teachers: Teachers in Years 6 and Beyond Not Affected

When a RIF goes so deeply that it affects third-year teachers, *all* teachers in their third, fourth, or fifth year of teaching will be considered together for dismissals. This puts all third- through fifth-year teachers on a level playing field and allows decisions among this group to be based equally using the following criteria: classroom management, instruction, seniority, teacher attendance (absence), and teacher discipline.

Each teacher will be awarded a score of up to nine points: three points for ratings on the most recent summative teacher evaluation in the domains of instruction and classroom management for a total of six available points; and three possible points for seniority—one point for third year teachers; two points for fourth year teachers; and three points for fifth year teachers for each year completed in IPS.ⁱ Points will also be subtracted for actions that have a negative effect on teacher performance: one point will be subtracted for each written reprimand in a teacher’s personnel file; two points lost for each suspension; three points deducted for each Last Chance Agreementⁱⁱ; and one point subtracted for every three unexcused, unpaid absences (up to three points lost altogether).

Table 2. Criteria for Layoffs and Point System for Teachers in Years 1-5 Only

Layoff Decision Criteria	Available Points
<i>For Teachers in Years 1-2</i>	Point system not applicable. Up to administrator discretion; encouraged to use evaluation ratings in instructional competence and classroom management.
<i>For Teachers in Years 3-5</i>	
Instruction –based on the teacher’s most recent evaluation rating	3 points (points awarded correspond to rating on the evaluation)
Classroom management –based on the teacher’s most recent evaluation rating	3 points (points awarded correspond to rating on the evaluation)
Seniority	1 point for each year of teaching in years three through five (3 total points available): Year 3 -- 1 point Year 4 – 2 points Year 5 – 3 points [teaching in IPS]
Discipline Referrals	Subtract 1 point for each written reprimand placed in a teacher’s personnel file, Subtract 2 points for each suspension; Subtract 3 points for each Last Chance Agreement.
Teacher Attendance	Subtract 1 point per 3 unexcused, unpaid days absent (up to -3 points for over 6 absences)
Total Points Available	Up to 9
<i>For Teachers in Years 6 and Beyond</i>	Does not apply

The work was highlighted in an article in The Indianapolis Star by Matt Tully:

<http://www.indystar.com/article/20100409/NEWS08/4090339/Matthew-Tully-Change-will-help-IPS-hang-on-to-good-teachers>

ⁱ No points are awarded for time outside of IPS.

ⁱⁱ A “Last Chance Agreement” is a written reprimand that explains that if a teacher does a particular action again, he/she will be immediately fired, with no hearing necessary. It is a type of settlement agreement that allows the teacher to keep his/her job, but gives the administration latitude if it happens again.